

Message Text

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ACTION AF-04

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 SPC-01 PM-03 L-02 H-01 AID-10

CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 EUR-10 PRS-01 DRC-01

/059 W

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R 211645Z DEC 73

FM AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2250

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY BANGUI

AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

C O N F I D E N T I A L YAOUNDE 4157

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, CF, CM

SUBJECT: US/CONGO RELATIONS

1. SUMMARY: GOC MAY BE MOVING, IF AT SNAIL'S PACE, TOWARDS READINESS TO CONSIDER RESUMPTION OF RELATIONS WITH U.S.
2. JEAN CLAUDE GANGA, SECGEN OF SUPREME COUNCIL FOR SPORT IN AFRICA TOOK ME ASIDE AT RECEPTION DECEMBER 19 TO INFORM ME ON PERSONAL AND VERY CONFIDENTIAL BASIS THAT HE BELIEVED CONGO BRAZZAVILLE WAS SERIOUSLY INTERESTED IN RESUMING RELATIONS WITH U.S.
3. GANGA, STATED THAT DURING RECENT VISIT TO BRAZZAVILLE HE HAD MET FOREIGN AND FINANCE MINISTERS AND OTHERS. FINANCE MINISTER HAD SPOKEN OF COUNTRY'S DESPERATE FINANCIAL SITUATION AND NEED FOR OUTSIDE ASSISTANCE. GANGA ASKED WHY GOC DID NOT RENEW RELATIONS WITH US, POINTING OUT THAT CHINA NOW ENJOYS A PROFITABLE RELATIONSHIP WITH U.S.- WHY SHOULD CONGO BE MORE ROYALIST THAN KING. ACCORDING GANGA, CONFIDENTIAL

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MINISTERS INDICATED THAT SUCH A MOVE WAS VERY MUCH ON THEIR

MINDS, THAT SEVERAL GOC MINISTERS AND ASSEMBLY MEMBERS HAD BEEN PRESSING FOR IT. IN FACT FONMIN RECENTLY HAD TO RESPOND TO PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION ON SUBJECT.

4. GANGA ASKED FONMIN WHY HE HAD NOT TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF HIS RECENT PRESENCE AT UNGA TO MAKE SOME SOUNDINGS OF U.S. OFFICIALS. REPLY WAS THAT SUCH AN APPROACH WOULD HAVE BEEN TOO DIRECT. GANGA HAD IMPRESSION THAT GOC HESITATING TO TAKE FIRST STEP BUT WOULD RESPOND TO A U.S. MOVE.

5. I STATED THAT I FELT SURE THAT USG WOULD BE PLEASED TO HAVE NORMAL RELATIONS WITH CONGO. ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS IN PAST YEARS, WE HAD HAD HINTS THAT GOC MIGHT BE RECEPTIVE TO SUCH A DEVELOPMENT. I RECALLED ONE OCCASION WHEN WE SENT AN OFFICER FROM OUR EMBASSY IN KINSHASA TO LOOK AT OUR BRAZZAVILLE PROPERTY WITH THE THOUGHT THAT GOC, IF IT WERE REALLY RECEPTIVE TO RESUMPTION, WOULD USE OCCASION TO TAKE SOME SOUNDINGS.

6. I FELT OBLIGED TO WARN GANGA THAT GOC SHOULD NOT COUNT ON ANY AID COMMITMENT SHOULD IT BE INTERESTED IN PURSUING QUESTION OF RESUMPTION OF RELATIONS. NORMAL RELATIONS, HOWEVER, WOULD CREATE A MORE PROPITIOUS ATMOSPHERE IN WHICH, IN THE COURSE OF TIME, SOME POSSIBILITIES OF COOPERATION COULD DEVELOP, INCLUDING THOSE IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR. GANGA APPEARED TO GET THE POINT.

7. IN CLOSING THE CONVERSATION GANGA STRESSED THAT OUR DISCUSSION SHOULD BE CONSIDERED A PRIVATE ONE ONLY. HE HAD NO MANDATE TO RAISE RELATIONS ISSUE WITH ME AND MIGHT WELL GET IN TROUBLE IN BRAZZAVILLE IF WORD GOT BACK. HE WOULD HOWEVER KEEP OUR DISCUSSION IN MIND FOR HIS SUBSEQUENT ENCOUNTERS WITH GOC MINISTERS AND WOULD LET ME KNOW LATER IF ANYTHING FURTHER SHOULD DEVELOP.

8. COMMENT: GANGA, A FORMER CONGO MINISTER, IS ON CLOSE TERMS WITH FOREIGN AND FINANCE MINISTERS, BOTH OF WHOM WERE IN YAOUNDE DURING WEEK ON UNSPECIFIED MISSION TO PRESIDENT AHIDJO. GANGA HOPED TO SEE THEM BEFORE THEIR DEPARTURE. (HE MENTIONED THAT FONMIN NOT LONG AGO HAD EXPECTED TO BE NAMED PRIME MINISTER AND HAD TRIED TO PERSUADE HIM TO

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ACCEPT MINISTERIAL POST. HE HAD REFUSED BELIEVING HE COULD NOT WORK UNDER CURRENT CONDITIONS IN BRAZZAVILLE AND THAT HE WOULD END UP IN PRISON.)

9. ACTION PROPOSED: I WILL KEEP IN DISCREET TOUCH WITH GANGA. IF THERE ARE ANY POINTS DEPT. WOULD WISH STRESSED, PLEASE ADVISE. APART FROM CONFIRMING TO HIM IF SUCH IS CASE, THAT USG WOULD BE PLEASED TO HAVE NORMAL RELATIONS

WITH GOC, I WOULD BE INCLINED TO AWAIT SOME FURTHER INDICATION
FROM HIM OF EVOLVING GOC ATTITUDES.
MOORE

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